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Stephen R. McCue

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March 5, 2007

TO: Members, House Appropriations Committee
FR: Mary McCue, lobbyist, Directors Association of Human
Resource Development Councils (HRDCs)

Re: HB 808

The directors of the state's 12 Human Resource Development Councils support the budget developed by the Appropriations Health and Human Services Subcommittee.

HRDCs urge your support for:

-- Ombudsman funding -- Warm Hearts/Homes: The Subcommittee recommended funding of \$600,000 over the biennium for the Energy Ombudsman program. The dollars are used for case management staff at HRDCs who help people who need energy assistance. These case managers identify and address emergency heating situations and encourage recipients to reduce their home energy costs while becoming energy self-sufficient. Funds may also be used for low-cost weatherization materials.

-- Low-Income Energy Assistance (LIEAP): The Subcommittee had recommended \$1 million in state general funds to be used to supplement the low-income energy assistance benefits for approximately 22,700 Montana households.

Members of the Health and Human Services Subcommittee listened carefully to the public testimony offered on the department's budget and worked thoughtfully to craft that budget. The Subcommittee labored diligently to determine Montanans' health and human service priorities for the next two years, but with an eye toward the sustainability of programs.

We entreat you: do not abandon the work that resulted from the collective wisdom and life experience of the capable members of this Subcommittee. Fund the health and human services budget as envisioned by your own Subcommittee.